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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Addendum

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES ON THE WORK OF ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening of the session

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its forty-fifth session at the Palais des Nations at Geneva from 3 to 7 October 1994. The session was opened by the outgoing Chairman, Mr. J. F. Boddens-Hosang (Netherlands), who began by welcoming Spain, the Executive Committee's newest member.

2. The outgoing Chairman recalled that a number of delegations were in the process of applying for Executive Committee membership, or had expressed a desire to do so. He felt that it was important for those who had a "demonstrated interest in and devotion to the solution of the refugee problem" (General Assembly resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950, annex, para. 4) to play their full role in discussions on policy matters. The outgoing Chairman noted that a number of States Members of the United Nations and specialized agencies enjoyed observer status in the subcommittees and informal meetings of the Executive Committee, a position which, in practice, did not differ greatly from that of official members. Over the years, the Executive Committee had developed an impressive array of internationally accepted norms and principles for the protection of refugees and others of humanitarian concern.

3. The outgoing Chairman then commented on the functioning of the Executive Committee. At present, the plenary session of the Executive Committee involved some three days of general debate, while the decisions and conclusions of the Committee were broached in the subcommittees and negotiated during meetings of the Friends of the Rapporteur. Further thought had to be given to whether the present arrangements were the best way to address the needs and expectations of members of UNHCR and the Executive Committee.

4. Noting the difficult year that the Office had been through, notably as a consequence of developments in Rwanda, the outgoing Chairman offered high praise for the staff of UNHCR. He recalled that during a year of working as Chairman of the Executive Committee, he had visited refugee camps in Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, and participated actively in the UNHCR non-governmental organization Partnership in Action (PARINAC) process. In the course of these and other activities as Chairman, he had witnessed the great devotion of UNHCR staff at headquarters and in the field. He expressed his appreciation to participants for having been able to serve as Chairman for the past year.

B. Election of officers

5. Under rule 10 of the rules of procedure, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mr. Ahmad Kamal (Pakistan)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Jakob Esper Larsen (Denmark)

Rapporteur: Mr. Msuya W. I. Mangachi (United Republic of Tanzania)

C. Representation on the Committee

6. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela and Zaire.

7. The Governments of the following States were present as observers:

Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Nepal, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Sovereign Order of Malta was also represented as an observer.

8. The United Nations system was represented as follows:

United Nations Office at Geneva, Centre for Human Rights, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), World Food Programme (WFP), International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

9. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers:

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Commission, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of African Unity (OAU), Organization of the Islamic Conference.

10. A total of 130 non-governmental organizations were represented by observers.

D. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

11. The Executive Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda: 1/

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

4. General debate.

5. Programme, administrative and financial matters:

   (a) Review of UNHCR programmes financed by voluntary funds in 1993-1994 and of proposed programmes and budget for 1995;

   (b) Status of contributions and overall financial requirements for 1993 and 1994;

   (c) Administration and management;

   (d) Adoption of 1995 general programmes.

6. Participation of government observer delegations.

7. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Executive Committee.

8. Any other business.

9. Adoption of the draft report of the forty-fifth session.

10. Closing of the session.

E. Opening statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee

12. The incoming Chairman, Mr. Ahmad Kamal (Pakistan), began by praising his predecessor's devotion and commitment, and by paying tribute to the High Commissioner, her staff, and to non-governmental organizations, whose workers were full partners in the humanitarian field. Evoking the memory of those who had lost their lives in the cause of duty, the Chairman then requested the Executive Committee to join him in a minute of silence.

13. The Chairman offered seven ideas on the challenge of adjusting to a new order still going through its birth pangs. The first involved more efficient prevention, especially to address the problems of victims of internal conflicts, actual or potential victims of the situation in States that have recently emerged from authoritarian rule, and citizens of developing countries in flight from inhuman poverty or socio-economic instability. The problem in Rwanda, which had persisted for several decades, was cited as an egregious example of a failure to address root causes. A refugee, the Chairman maintained, was the helpless victim of the breakdown of the social contract and blatant evidence of political or diplomatic failure at the regional or international level. The Chairman also mentioned the link between economic difficulties and political

upheaval. Preventive work could be facilitated by the adoption of a containment strategy to identify points of tension or areas of potential conflict at a regional and global level.

14. The notion of a regional approach constituted the Chairman's second idea. While upholding the humanitarian nature of the High Commissioner's mandate, he stressed that the High Commissioner has a vested interest in peace and stability. He regretted that humanitarian action was being used to buy time for solutions that should have been sought before tragedy struck.

15. The third idea concerned the relief to development continuum, whose parameters, the Chairman felt, had to be clearly defined. It was thus incumbent upon the international community to provide the High Commissioner with the conceptual wherewithal to transform the pragmatic responses of UNHCR into an internationally recognized institutional framework. The Chairman's fourth point centred on the role of non-governmental organizations, whose importance had been reiterated at the recent PARINAC conference.

16. On the fifth topic, statelessness, the Chairman ventured that a global plan of action to reduce statelessness would be both timely and desirable, and stressed the importance of helping newly independent States to avoid or mitigate the problem. Decentralization formed the subject of his next idea; in view of the exponential increase in the tasks and responsibilities assigned to the High Commissioner, restructuring in favour of a greater devolution of decision-making power to the field was imperative. The Chairman's seventh thought concerned the need to strengthen the Office's policy formulation process with the best available professional expertise.

17. The Chairman concluded his remarks by suggesting some ways to improve the functioning of the Executive Committee, notably by reintroducing a regular agenda in addition to the general debate, and by setting up an open-ended group of donor and asylum States to meet in advance of the subcommittees to consider the inputs of Member States. The Executive Committee, the Chairman was sure, would have occasion to revisit some of his suggestions in the coming days and months.

II. WORK OF THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION (items 4 to 10)

18. The High Commissioner delivered an opening statement to the Executive Committee, which is reproduced in the annex to the present report. Following this, the Executive Director of WFP addressed the Executive Committee. The full account of the deliberations of the Committee, including the statements or other interventions made by delegations on all the agenda items of the meeting, as well as the closing statements by the Chairman and the High Commissioner, are contained in the summary records of the session.

III. DECISIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Conclusions on international protection

1. General conclusion on international protection

19. The Executive Committee,

(a) Expresses its deep concern over the immense human suffering and loss of life that have accompanied recent crises involving refugee flows and other forced displacement;

(b) Remains gravely preoccupied by the scale and complexity of current refugee problems, which have made more difficult the accomplishment of the High Commissioner's crucial functions of ensuring international protection for refugees and achieving timely and durable solutions to their plight;

(c) Reaffirms the importance of the 1951 Convention 2/ and the 1967 Protocol 3/ relating to the Status of Refugees as the cornerstone of the international system for the protection of refugees, and underlines the role of the High Commissioner, pursuant to articles 35 and II of those instruments, respectively, and to the statute of her Office, in supervising their application;

(d) Welcomes the accession or succession to these instruments in the past year of Dominica, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Tajikistan, bringing to 127 the number of States parties to one or both instruments, and, noting that the States Members of the United Nations now number 189, and in view of the global character of the refugee problem, urges States that are not yet parties to accede to these instruments and all States to implement them fully;

(e) Warmly welcomes the demonstrated commitment of States to continue to receive and host refugees in cooperation with UNHCR and to provide them with international protection;

(f) Deplores the fact that in certain situations refugees, as well as returnees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, have been subjected to armed attack, murder, rape and other violations of or threats to their personal security and other fundamental rights and that incidents of refoulement and denial of access to safety have occurred;

(g) Calls again upon States to uphold and strengthen asylum as an indispensable instrument for the international protection of refugees, to respect scrupulously the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, and to make every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of refugees within their jurisdiction;

(h) Stresses the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing the protection of refugees, and calls upon all States to take an active part, in collaboration with UNHCR, in efforts to assist countries, in particular those with limited resources, that receive and care for large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers;

(i) Reiterates the importance of ensuring access for all persons seeking international protection to fair and efficient procedures for the determination

of refugee status or other mechanisms, as appropriate, to ensure that persons in need of international protection are identified and granted such protection;

(j) Recognizes that applications for asylum by large numbers of irregular migrants who are not in need of international protection continue to pose serious problems in certain regions, and reiterates in this connection its conclusion No. 71 (XLIV) (1993), paragraphs j, k and l;

(k) Notes that a large number of those persons in need of international protection have been forced to flee or to remain outside their countries of origin as a result of danger to their lives or freedom owing to situations of conflict;

(l) Recognizes that, while persons who are unable to return in safety to their countries of origin as a result of situations of conflict may or may not be considered refugees within the terms of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, depending on the particular circumstances, they none the less are often in need of international protection, humanitarian assistance and a solution to their plight;

(m) Recalls that UNHCR has often been requested by the United Nations General Assembly to extend protection and assistance to persons who have been forced to seek refuge outside their countries of origin as a result of situations of conflict, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue to provide international protection to such persons, and to seek solutions to the problems arising from their forced displacement, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, and calls upon all States to assist and support the High Commissioner's efforts in this regard;

(n) Recognizes that in Africa and Latin America, regional instruments provide for the protection of refugees fleeing armed conflict and civil strife, as well as those fearing persecution, and that in other regions, persons who require international protection, but who either are not considered refugees within the scope of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol or are in countries that have not acceded to these instruments, have generally been provided protection and humanitarian assistance through specific measures adopted by States and in full cooperation with UNHCR;

(o) Recognizes the desirability of exploring further measures to ensure international protection to all who need it;

(p) Acknowledges the value of regional harmonization of national policies to ensure that persons who are in need of international protection actually receive it, and calls upon States to consult UNHCR at the regional level in achieving this objective;

(q) Encourages the High Commissioner to continue to promote international cooperation in providing international protection to all who require it, and to engage in further consultations and discussions concerning measures to achieve this objective, which might involve the elaboration of guiding principles, including for concerted action;

(r) Considers that temporary protection, which has been described by the High Commissioner in the context of the Comprehensive Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the former Yugoslavia as including admission to safety, respect for basic human rights, protection against refoulement and safe return when conditions permit to the country of origin, can be of value as a pragmatic

and flexible method of affording international protection of a temporary nature in situations of conflict or persecution involving large-scale outflows;

(s) Welcomes the further exploration by the High Commissioner, pursuant to protection conclusion (m) (1993), of temporary protection as an asylum strategy, in the context of addressing prevention, protection and solutions on a comprehensive regional basis, and looks forward to further discussions among interested Governments on this subject, including the duration of temporary protection;

(t) Notes that the beneficiaries of temporary protection may include both persons who qualify as refugees under the terms of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol and others who may not so qualify, and that in providing temporary protection States and UNHCR should not diminish the protection afforded to refugees under those instruments;

(u) Calls upon UNHCR, in close cooperation with the Governments concerned, to continue to coordinate and to provide guidance concerning the implementation of temporary protection and other forms of asylum oriented towards repatriation, in situations where return home is considered the most appropriate durable solution, including advice on voluntary repatriation and on safe return once the need for international protection has ceased;

(v) Reiterates that voluntary repatriation, when it is feasible, is the ideal solution to refugee problems, and calls upon countries of origin, countries of asylum, UNHCR and the international community as a whole to do everything possible to enable refugees to exercise freely their right to return home in safety and dignity;

(w) Notes that numerous obstacles to voluntary repatriation have been encountered, including threats to the safety of repatriating refugees both in countries of asylum and countries of origin and the persistence or recrudescence of conditions causing refugee flight;

(x) Stresses in this connection the responsibilities of States of origin to readmit their nationals and to ensure their safety and welfare, and of countries of asylum to provide for the security and safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees, and calls upon the international community to assist States to discharge these responsibilities with respect to refugees and returnees;

(y) Reaffirms its conclusions Nos. 18 (XXXI) (1980) and 40 (XXXVI) (1985) on voluntary repatriation, and underscores the leading role of UNHCR in promoting, facilitating and coordinating voluntary repatriation of refugees, in cooperation with States concerned, including ensuring that international protection continues to be extended to those in need until such time as they can return in safety and dignity to their country of origin, assisting, where needed, the return and reintegration of repatriating refugees and monitoring their safety and well-being upon return;

(z) Acknowledges the usefulness, in appropriate circumstances, of visits by representatives of the countries of origin to refugee camps in countries of asylum within the framework of information campaigns to promote voluntary repatriation, and requests UNHCR, in cooperation with the countries of asylum concerned, to facilitate such visits;

(aa) Recognizes that for repatriation to be a sustainable and thus truly durable solution to refugee problems it is essential that the need for

rehabilitation, reconstruction and national reconciliation be addressed in a comprehensive and effective manner, and calls upon the international community to continue to support the High Commissioner's efforts to promote comprehensive and regional approaches to prevention, protection and solutions in consultation with States and the relevant international, regional and national governmental and non-governmental bodies, as appropriate;

(bb) Reaffirms the continued importance of resettlement as an instrument of protection and its use as a durable solution in specific circumstances;

(cc) Emphasizes the need, particularly in complex emergencies that include humanitarian and peace-keeping operations, to ensure respect for the High Commissioner's protection mandate and to preserve the impartial and purely humanitarian nature of UNHCR activities;

(dd) Reiterates its support for the High Commissioner's activities for internally displaced persons in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/116 of 20 December 1993 and expresses its appreciation for the detailed and productive discussions that have been held within the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection and in other forums concerning ways in which the international community can better address the protection and assistance needs of the displaced;

(ee) Notes with concern the persistent problems of stateless persons in various regions and the emergence of new situations of statelessness, and, acknowledging the responsibilities already entrusted to the High Commissioner by the General Assembly with respect to the prevention of statelessness (General Assembly resolution 3274 (XXIX) of 10 December 1974), calls upon UNHCR to strengthen its efforts in this domain, including promoting accessions to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, training for UNHCR staff and government officials, and a systematic gathering of information on the dimension of the problem, and to keep the Executive Committee informed of these activities;

(ff) Calls upon the High Commissioner to ensure the active participation of UNHCR in the 1995 World Conference on Women and its regional preparatory conferences in order that the situation of refugee women remains high on the international agenda of women's issues;

(gg) Urges UNHCR, in cooperation with Governments and other United Nations and international and non-governmental organizations, especially UNICEF and ICRC, to continue its efforts to give special attention to the needs of refugee children, ensuring, in particular, that arrangements are made for their immediate and long-term care, including health, nutrition and education and, in the case of children who are separated from their families, for prompt registration, tracing and family reunion;

(hh) Calls upon States hosting refugees, in close collaboration with UNHCR and other relevant organizations, and consistent with the UNHCR Guidelines on Refugee Children, to safeguard the security of refugee children and to ensure that they are not recruited into the military or other armed groups;

(ii) Notes with distress the injury and loss of life caused to refugees and returnees, including women and children who are maimed and incapacitated in large numbers, by the indiscriminate use of land-mines, as well as the harmful and long-term impact of these weapons on the voluntary repatriation, rehabilitation, and resumption of normal lives of millions of refugees and

displaced persons, and endorses the High Commissioner's efforts to further international efforts to reduce or eliminate the threat that land-mines pose to them;

(jj) Recognizes the importance of ensuring access to current and reliable information on involuntary displacements in the interests of promoting solutions at all levels of the refugee situation and reaffirms support for the High Commissioner's continuing effort in this regard to develop an information policy and databases capable of addressing new challenges with relevant information sources;

(kk) Notes with satisfaction the activities of UNHCR with regard to the promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles and calls upon the High Commissioner to continue to expand and strengthen the Office's promotion and training activities, with the active support of States and through increased cooperation with human rights organizations, academic institutions, including the International Institute of Humanitarian Law at San Remo, and other relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system;

(ll) Welcomes the High Commissioner's growing cooperation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her continued cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights and calls upon UNHCR to continue its active involvement and cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights;

(mm) Recognizes the continuing usefulness of inter-sessional meetings of the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection and requests the High Commissioner to convene at least one such meeting to consider current protection issues and to report on progress in the deliberations of the Subcommittee at its forty-sixth session.

2. Conclusion on internally displaced persons

20. The Executive Committee,

(a) Recognizes that the involuntary displacement of persons within their own countries is a problem of global dimensions, and that the plight of such internally displaced persons, whose numbers may exceed those of refugees, is a matter of grave humanitarian concern;

(b) Notes that the many and varied underlying causes of involuntary internal displacement and of refugee movements are often similar, and that the problems of both refugees and the internally displaced often call for similar measures with respect to prevention, protection, humanitarian assistance and solutions;

(c) Reiterates the need for the international community to seek ways and means to avert involuntary displacements;

(d) Emphasizes that since internally displaced persons remain within the territorial jurisdiction of their own countries, the primary responsibility for their welfare and protection lies with the State concerned;

(e) Urges the Governments of States where there are internally displaced persons to fulfil their responsibility for their welfare and protection;

(f) Calls upon the international community, in appropriate circumstances, to provide timely and speedy humanitarian assistance and support to countries affected by internal displacement to help them fulfil their responsibility towards the displaced;

(g) Notes that, in many instances, the internally displaced are present alongside refugees, returnees or a vulnerable local population, in situations where it is neither reasonable nor feasible to treat the categories differently in responding to their needs for assistance and protection;

(h) Recognizes that actions by the international community, in consultation and coordination with the concerned State, on behalf of the internally displaced may contribute to the easing of tensions and the resolution of problems resulting in displacement, and constitute important components of a comprehensive approach to the prevention and solution of refugee problems;

(i) Calls upon the Governments concerned to ensure safe and timely humanitarian access to persons in need of protection and assistance, including the internally displaced and victims of armed conflict, as well as refugees within their territories;

(j) Recognizes that General Assembly resolution 48/116 of 20 December 1993, in which the Assembly reaffirmed support for the High Commissioner's efforts, "on the basis of specific requests from the Secretary-General or the competent principal organs of the United Nations and with the consent of the concerned State, and taking into account the complementarities of the mandates and expertise of other relevant organizations, to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to persons displaced within their own country in situations calling for the particular expertise of the Office, especially where such efforts could contribute to the prevention or solution of refugee problems", continues to provide an appropriate framework for the involvement of the High Commissioner in situations of internal displacement;

(k) Encourages the High Commissioner to continue the efforts of her Office to put into action its internal criteria and guidelines for UNHCR involvement in situations of internal displacement, as an important contribution towards a more concerted response by the international community to the needs of the internally displaced;

(l) Emphasizes that activities on behalf of internally displaced persons must not undermine the institution of asylum, including the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution;

(m) Recognizes that international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and, in many cases, national laws include norms providing for the security and protection of the internally displaced as well as those at risk of displacement, and expressed serious concern at the failure of parties involved to respect these norms;

(n) Acknowledges the importance of the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons and, in particular, his efforts to compile existing international standards in respect of the treatment of the internally displaced, and to develop a code of conduct comprising guiding principles in that regard;

(o) Calls upon UNHCR to continue its close cooperation with the Representative of the Secretary-General in the fulfilment of his mandate;

(p) Further acknowledges the essential role of the International Committee of the Red Cross in disseminating international humanitarian law and in providing protection and humanitarian assistance to those displaced by armed conflict;

(q) Calls for the strengthening of efforts in the training and dissemination of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and for the joint promotion, by organizations and agencies concerned, of the implementation of these international standards;

(r) Considers that, in addressing the problem of internal displacement, the international community should seek to collaborate to the maximum possible extent with existing humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, with relevant expertise;

(s) Encourages UNHCR to continue its efforts, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and in cooperation with other agencies concerned, to reinforce and structure coordination through existing inter-agency mechanisms, notably the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, in order to improve the response by the international community to the plight of the internally displaced, and stresses the importance in this connection of strengthening mechanisms for the sharing of information;

(t) Urges that discussions on inter-agency aspects of internal displacement be pursued actively in other appropriate forums so as to ensure a comprehensive and coherent approach by the international community to the problem of internally displaced persons.

3. Conclusion on the recommendations of the OAU/UNHCR Commemorative Symposium on Refugees and Forced Population Displacements in Africa

21. The Executive Committee,

Recalling its Conclusion on International Protection of 1993, in which it, inter alia, looked forward to events commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and encouraged UNHCR to participate actively in its commemoration, 4/

(a) Takes note with satisfaction of the activities that have been carried out in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption, and the twentieth year of the entry into force, of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;

(b) Congratulates the High Commissioner and OAU on having successfully organized jointly the OAU/UNHCR Symposium on Refugees and Forced Population Displacements in Africa, which was held at Addis Ababa from 8 to 10 September 1994, as one of the commemorative activities;

(c) Welcomes the recommendations adopted by the above-mentioned Symposium as an important contribution to the framework for tackling the problems and challenges of forced population displacements in Africa in general; providing asylum, protection and assistance to refugees and other victims of forced displacements; as well as for finding the necessary solutions for these problems;

(d) Commends the recommendations to the relevant States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for consideration and implementation as necessary;

(e) Requests the High Commissioner, in close collaboration with the relevant States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, most particularly OAU, to disseminate the recommendations widely, promote as necessary their implementation and keep the Executive Committee informed of progress in this regard.

B. Conclusions on refugee women and children

1. Conclusion on the recommendations of the working group: refugee women

22. The Executive Committee,

Having considered the progress report on the situation of refugee women and refugee children and financial implications of the recommendations of the Working Group on Refugee Women and Refugee Children, 5/ and reaffirming previous conclusions dealing with the protection of and assistance to refugee women,

Noting the need for thorough preparation by UNHCR for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, which will take place in September 1995, including the effective involvement of refugee women,

Noting with concern that field-level implementation of the Policy and Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women continues to be limited, and recognizing the need to further sensitize humanitarian staff to the situation of refugee women,

Underlining the importance of activities directed towards the empowerment of refugee women,

(a) Commends the initiatives taken by the High Commissioner and, emphasizing staff accountability, encourages further efforts to ensure that the Policy on Refugee Women is actively applied in programme implementation;

(b) Urges the High Commissioner to undertake initiatives for refugee women in the areas of leadership and skills training, legal awareness and education, and in particular in the area of reproductive health, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of the refugees, in conformity with universally recognized international human rights and the UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women;

(c) Requests the High Commissioner to establish closer linkages with international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, to address issues related to women victims of armed conflict;

(d) Requests the High Commissioner to undertake a result-based evaluation of the women victims of violence project in Kenya and to present the evaluation report to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters;

(e) Reaffirms that socio-economic knowledge of the target population is critical to efficient programme design, and encourages further expansion of

People-Oriented Planning Training, its integration into other UNHCR training initiatives, as well as the involvement of local non-governmental organizations in affected countries;

(f) Requests the High Commissioner to report on the representation by level and distribution of female protection and field staff at a 1995 meeting of the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters;

(g) Requests the High Commissioner to report to the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the Working Group's recommendations relating to refugee women, and UNHCR activities for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace.

2. Conclusion on refugee children

23. The Executive Committee,

Expressing appreciation for the revised Guidelines on Refugee Children and the collaborative spirit in which they have been developed,

Stressing that educational programmes for refugee children contribute enormously to their well-being and towards finding a durable solution for them,

Noting with concern that the majority of refugee children do not receive the education to which they are entitled,

Noting with appreciation the progress made in the registration of refugees in emergencies and, as part of this, the early identification of unaccompanied children and follow-up of their needs,

Commending the Joint Statement on the Evacuation of Unaccompanied Children from Rwanda issued in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

Noting with satisfaction the work being done by UNHCR, and other United Nations and international bodies to strengthen the protection afforded by international humanitarian law for children who are victims of armed conflict,

Welcoming the active participation of UNHCR, with particular reference to the protection of refugee children, in the study on the impact of armed conflict on children to be undertaken by the expert appointed pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993,

(a) Urges UNHCR, in cooperation with Governments, other United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to continue and intensify efforts to respond to the needs of refugee children, particularly unaccompanied children;

(b) Supports efforts to enhance the implementation of the Guidelines on Refugee Children, in particular, the integration of refugee children's issues into the training of UNHCR staff as well as their implementing partners, and the creation of a Regional Support Unit for Refugee Children;

(c) Reaffirms the calls made in decision 33 (d) (1992) 6/ for the basic education needs of refugee children to be better addressed, and requests the

High Commissioner to continue her efforts to give higher priority to the education of all refugee children, ensuring equal access for girls, giving due regard to the curriculum of the country of origin;

(d) Urges UNHCR to identify educational requirements in the early stages of an emergency so that prompt attention may be given to such needs;

(e) Welcomes the early deployment of community services officers in emergencies, as a means of identifying and addressing refugee children's needs;

(f) Encourages UNHCR, in collaboration with the World Food Programme, to intensify its efforts to prevent gaps in the timely provision of balanced food, which seriously affect the nutritional status of vulnerable groups, especially children;

(g) Stresses that, where evacuation of children is necessary in order to save lives, all possibilities of bringing them to neighbouring countries should be explored before consideration is given to taking them to more distant countries;

(h) Expresses concern that, despite the development of a united inter-agency position on the evacuation of children from situations of armed conflict, some evacuations continue to be undertaken in an irregular manner, without adequate registration and documentation, thus reducing the possibilities of reuniting such children with their families;

(i) Requests that a progress report on the implementation of the UNHCR Policy on Refugee Children and of the related Guidelines be presented to the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session.

C. Decisions and conclusions on programme, administrative and financial matters

1. General decision on programme, administrative and financial matters

24. The Executive Committee,

Having reviewed the information contained in the document entitled "UNHCR activities financed by voluntary funds: report for 1993-1994 and proposed programmes and budget for 1995"; 7/ overview of UNHCR activities: humanitarian assistance policy, programmes, administration and financial matters: 1993-1995; 8/ update on programmes and funding; 9/ and the note on UNHCR evaluation activities, 10/

Having taken note of the document entitled "Voluntary funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: accounts for the year 1993" 11/ and the report of the Board of Auditors thereon, 12/

Welcoming the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on UNHCR activities financed from voluntary funds: report for 1993-1994 and proposed budget for 1995, 13/

Noting the progress report on the situation of refugee women and refugee children and financial implications of the recommendations of the Working Group on Refugee Women and Refugee Children, 5/ refugees and the environment and the

information notes on the education account 14/ and internal oversight mechanisms: Director of Inspection and Evaluation, 15/

(a) Notes that the current proposed estimates for 1995, based on needs known at this stage, under both general and special programmes, amount to some $1,133,291,900;

(b) Approves the country and area programmes and the headquarters and other programmes for the revised 1994 general programmes, which remain at $418,523,000 (including $25,000,000 for the emergency fund and $20,000,000 for the general allocation for voluntary repatriation) as contained in document A/AC.96/825 (Parts I-VI), and as shown in document A/AC.96/824, annex 1, column 5;

(c) Approves the country and area programmes, and the headquarters and other programmes for the 1995 general programmes amounting to $415,413,000 (including $25,000,000 for the emergency fund and $20,000,000 for the general allocation for voluntary repatriation) as contained in document A/AC.96/825 (Parts I-VI), and as shown in document A/AC.96/824, annex 1, column 8;

(d) Calls upon UNHCR to present to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters at an early session in 1995 an update on 1995 programme needs, which will take into account especially developments in refugee situations and additional initiatives that need to be taken to give effect to programmatic priorities adopted by the Executive Committee;

(e) Authorizes the High Commissioner to effect such adjustments in projects, country or area programmes, and the headquarters and other programmes, as may be required by changes affecting the refugee or returnee programmes for which they were planned, using the general programmes reserve where necessary, and to report such adjustments to the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session;

(f) Approves the transfer of an additional amount of $250,000 from the 1994 programme reserve and an amount of up to $500,000 from the 1995 programme reserve to the Fund for International Staff Housing and Basic Amenities;

(g) Endorses, with a view to integrating fully the needs of refugee women and refugee children into the regular programming of UNHCR, whether under general or special programmes, and welcomes the initial identification by UNHCR, of the special initiatives set out in the report on the situation of refugee women and refugee children and financial implications of the Working Group on Refugee Women and Refugee Children, 5/ and referred to in paragraph 58 of the report of the meeting of the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters held on 29 September 1994; 16/ the costs associated with these initial steps will be accommodated within the 1995 General Programme Budget;

(h) Requests UNHCR to undertake a lessons learned exercise, which should include the convening of an informal consultation on the response, both in Headquarters and in the field, to the Rwanda emergency. The exercise, led by UNHCR, should involve relevant United Nations agencies and departments, Governments and implementing agencies, and should address, inter alia, the issues set out in paragraphs 38 and 86 of document A/AC.96/838;

(i) Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to examine, in close collaboration with the members of the Executive Committee, the relationship between the current budget structure of general programme and special programme

budgets, and the recognized need for improved transparency, efficiency, flexibility and accurate targeting in programme implementation as well as enhanced oversight, financial planning and effective fund raising and to report to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters at an early date;

(j) Requests the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to improve its programme management practices, particularly with respect to the procedures governing its relationship with its implementing partners;

(k) Calls upon UNHCR representatives to follow carefully the guidelines determined for the preparation and establishment of country/area programme submissions, which should reflect consultations with host Governments and other relevant authorities as well as implementing partners, so that the High Commissioner has available to her a clear presentation of the Office's priorities for a given country/area and the extent of refugee/returnee needs in that country/area;

(l) Endorses the reclassification of the post of Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support to the D-2 level;

(m) Approves the creation of a post, at the D-2 level, of the Director of Inspection and Evaluation Services (the Inspector).

2. Conclusion on refugees and the environment

25. The Executive Committee,

(a) Welcomes the formulation of interim environmental guidelines and other measures to promote a systematic approach by UNHCR to environmental matters;

(b) Requests the High Commissioner to formulate and promote refugee-related environmental projects in collaboration with host Governments, donors, international and national non-governmental organizations, other organizations and the refugees themselves, so as to mitigate the adverse impact on the environment of host countries;

(c) Requests the High Commissioner to keep under review the financial implications of the interim guidelines and to report on the elaboration of definitive guidelines and on activities carried out in the field.

3. Conclusion on the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development

26. The Executive Committee,

Concerned about the need for further progress by the United Nations system in addressing in a coherent and mutually supportive manner humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and development in countries of origin,

Recognizing the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in facilitating comprehensive responses to complex emergencies through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other mechanisms,

Noting the interdependence of the humanitarian activities of UNHCR and its mandate responsibility to facilitate solutions to refugee problems with comprehensive approaches to conflict resolution and post-conflict development,

Welcoming the High Commissioner's endeavours to apply regional approaches to refugee problems starting from the emergency phase of an operation and taking into account the affected countries of asylum as well as the country of origin facilitating viable and early solutions to the problems of displacement,

(a) Encourages the High Commissioner to proceed with the implementation of the policy and methodological framework for quick impact projects and to pursue the development of assistance strategies, operational mechanisms and collaborative arrangements which will enhance the capacity of the Office to support voluntary repatriation and a sustainable reintegration of the returnees in their countries;

(b) Requests the High Commissioner to promote a smooth, mutually supportive interface between humanitarian assistance and development programmes through inter-agency cooperation, including multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental actors at the level of the country of origin;

(c) Calls upon the High Commissioner to support the preparation of, and to participate actively in, the discussion on humanitarian assistance activities, particularly at the 1995 session of the Economic and Social Council, with a view to promoting an improved complementarity of roles and responsibilities in finding comprehensive solutions to complex emergencies within the United Nations system;

(d) Requests the High Commissioner to report on progress on matters pertaining to assistance policies and strategies for the promotion of durable solutions to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters.

4. Conclusion on the career management system of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

27. The Executive Committee,

Having considered the progress report on the implementation of the UNHCR career management system project,

Noting the comments of Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters regarding the need for the strong support and involvement of the Senior Management of UNHCR, for dialogue and cooperation among Executive Committee members, staff representatives and UNHCR management as well as the integration of the Career Management System and other major organizational initiatives such as the Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity within the framework of a well-defined strategy,

Recalling, within the context of the overall human resources management strategy of UNHCR, 17/ the description of the Career Management System project, which is composed of four elements, namely, a competency management system that defines core competencies for major job groupings, an objective performance appraisal process, a career development component and extensive managerial training,

Also recalling that the High Commissioner's ultimate goal, expressed in her opening address to the Executive Committee at its forty-fourth session (see the annex to the present report), is to create an institutional culture where effective performance, efficiency and accountability are prized objectives and that the attainment of this goal is linked to better human resources management, 4/

Reiterating the importance of a comprehensive approach to human resources management, so that UNHCR develops, at all levels of the organization, the managerial competencies needed to ensure that the organization can respond to future emerging humanitarian challenges,

(a) Commends the High Commissioner for progress made in implementing the Career Management System project;

(b) Urges UNHCR to integrate the project with other key UNHCR initiatives to improve programme delivery and to take steps to involve Executive Committee members, together with staff and their representatives and members of UNHCR management;

(c) Urges the High Commissioner to ensure continuation of strong support and involvement of senior management and direct dialogue between all participants;

(d) Requests the High Commissioner to keep the Executive Committee members fully informed of project progress through a presentation to the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters early in 1995, and by continuing to encourage members to put forth their ideas and make available the experience gained by their national institutions in implementing similar projects.

5. Conclusion on the security of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

28. The Executive Committee,

Noting with alarm the high levels of danger and insecurity in many areas in which UNHCR staff and the staff of UNHCR implementing partners are carrying out their humanitarian duties,

(a) Notes with profound regret the deaths of international and local UNHCR staff members as a consequence of violent events in several countries around the world;

(b) Appreciates the work of the UNHCR Field Staff Safety Section in the Division of Human Resources Management as well as the work of Field Staff Safety Officers in field duty stations;

(c) Welcomes the close cooperation between UNHCR, other United Nations organizations and programmes and specialized agencies with staff in dangerous field locations, and the United Nations Security Coordinator;

(d) Welcomes the initiative of UNHCR to organize a security training workshop open to staff of other United Nations organizations and programmes and specialized agencies as well as the staff of non-governmental organizations;

(e) Supports the High Commissioner in her efforts to improve the security situation of UNHCR staff, and staff of UNHCR implementing partners, engaged in humanitarian operations throughout the world;

(f) Welcomes the initiatives of the General Assembly in its resolution 48/37 of 9 December 1993 to conclude a draft convention on the safety and security of United Nations staff and associated personnel;

(g) Expresses its strong hope that the convention will extend the necessary protection to all staff involved in humanitarian operations of UNHCR.

D. Conclusions on other matters

1. Conclusion on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

29. The Executive Committee,

Having considered the overall situation of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in Africa,

(a) Notes with concern that underdevelopment, internal conflicts, human rights violations and the breakdown of law and order continue to precipitate and cause refugee outflows and internal displacement of persons in some countries;

(b) Equally notes with concern that access to and delivery of protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees, returnees and the internally displaced continues to be impeded;

(c) Calls upon the High Commissioner, in concert with States, other parties, the United Nations system, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, to address the root causes of displacements in order to attain durable solutions for the refugee problem and to avert refugee outflows through early warning mechanisms and action in a timely manner through bilateral and multilateral preventive diplomacy; welcomes in this respect the role played by the mechanism of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for conflict prevention, management and resolution;

(d) Requests UNHCR, in close cooperation with the OAU, to explore the feasibility of convening regional and subregional conferences to address the growing problems of African refugees and to develop comprehensive plans of action for humanitarian assistance and appropriate durable solutions;

(e) Notes with appreciation that African States continue to host and to admit refugees in their territories and to practise generous asylum policies, complemented by sacrifices and generosity on the part of their respective citizens despite resource limitations, overstretched social services and adverse environmental consequences caused by sudden, massive influxes and long stays of refugees in countries of asylum;

(f) Notes with grave concern the existence of specific national policies or practices which have a negative impact on the dignity, security or safety of the refugees or which produce refugee outflows or refugee-like situations; and also notes the efforts of UNHCR to protect, assist and find solutions for refugees, and, in this respect, calls upon the relevant States to take the necessary measures to address and remedy these impediments;

(g) Welcomes the prospects for voluntary repatriation and durable solutions across the continent and expresses appreciation to the High Commissioner and other parties for their ongoing successful efforts to promote and facilitate the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Mozambican refugees;

(h) Urges the High Commissioner to continue these exemplary initiatives, as appropriate;

(i) Appeals to Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the international community to overcome the obstacles to successful implementation of voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees in all these instances;

(j) Expresses appreciation to the High Commissioner for her remarkable efforts to mobilize resources and support from Governments and the international community as a whole in responding to an unprecedented complex emergency resulting from the sudden and massive influx of Rwandese refugees to four neighbouring countries;

(k) Expresses gratitude to the neighbouring countries, Governments and other parties who promptly supported the High Commissioner's efforts;

(l) Calls upon Governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the international community as a whole to strengthen the emergency response capacity of UNHCR based on the Rwanda emergency experience and to continue providing needed resources and operational support to assist Rwandese refugees and the host countries until a permanent solution can be implemented;

(m) Welcomes initiatives and measures being taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in concert with OAU and Governments in the region to ensure the security and safety of refugees and relief workers in the camps by removing coercive elements from the camps, the removal of which will allow the refugees to make free and voluntary decisions regarding their return when conditions inside Rwanda permit;

(n) Expresses its concern with the unsatisfactory security situation in the refugee camps and inside Rwanda, which delay the return of refugees and calls upon the parties concerned to adopt appropriate and constructive measures to improve the security conditions inside and outside Rwanda in order to permit voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity at the earliest possible opportunity;

(o) Emphasizes the need for a structured and coordinated action by all parties to assist the Government of Rwanda in the rehabilitation, reconstruction and normalization of civil society in Rwanda and to complement UNHCR activities related to repatriation. In this context UNHCR should continue to play an active role, together with OAU, in the establishment of a joint repatriation Commission and tripartite agreements for voluntary repatriation when conditions permit;

(p) Appeals to the international community to follow closely the evolution of the general situation in Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone and to support all political efforts currently being undertaken to normalize the present delicate situation;

(q) Calls upon the High Commissioner to continue to provide assistance in a timely and effective manner for Burundi returnees and Rwandese refugees in Burundi in order to avoid the creation of additional problems to an already fragile situation;

(r) Further calls upon the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes, intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure in refugee-impacted areas in countries of asylum;

(s) Calls upon Member States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide the necessary support and financial assistance to the High Commissioner to enhance her capacities and abilities to implement emergency operations, care and maintenance activities, and repatriation and reintegration programmes for the benefit of refugees, returnees and, as appropriate, certain groups of internally displaced persons;

(t) Expresses concern in this regard over the long stay of refugees in certain African countries and calls upon the High Commissioner to intensify efforts to find durable solutions for these populations;

(u) Requests the High Commissioner to review her general programmes in Africa, taking into account the increasing requirements in that region.

2. Conclusion on the International Conference on Central American Refugees

30. The Executive Committee,

Recalling the contribution made by the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA), throughout its duration, from May 1989 to June 1994, to the initiative of the Central American Presidents expressed in the procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America, signed at the Esquipulas II summit meeting on 7 August 1987,

Recognizing the importance of the Declaration and the Concerted Plan of Action in favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, adopted at the International Conference on Central American Refugees held at Guatemala City from 29 to 31 May 1989, and the Declarations of the First and Second International Meetings of the Follow-up Committee of the Conference,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts made, throughout the five-year duration of the CIREFCA Concerted Plan of Action, by the Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua), Belize and Mexico, to find lasting solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, in accordance with respect for fundamental principles of international protection and human rights,

Recalling the importance attached by the Executive Committee to the specific incorporation of the needs of refugees, returnees and displaced populations into post-CIREFCA strategy of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the request addressed by the Executive Committee, at its forty-fourth session, to both UNHCR and UNDP to convene jointly an informal technical meeting, prior to the conclusion of the process, to enable consultations with all parties, in this respect,

Taking into account the outcome of the Third and final International Meeting of the CIREFCA Follow-up Committee, held at Mexico City on 28 and 29 June 1994, and the Declaration of Commitments, adopted by consensus by the international community on that occasion,

Welcoming the deployment of the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) and the Agreement on the Reintegration of Populations Uprooted by the Armed Confrontation signed in June 1994 within the framework of the Guatemalan peace process, as a crucial step towards conclusion of a peace agreement in Guatemala, on which resolution of the situation of uprooted populations in this country depends,

Expressing appreciation for the firm political, technical and financial support provided by the international donor community in favour of durable solutions for uprooted Central Americans, throughout CIREFCA,

Expressing appreciation also for the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the CIREFCA Concerted Plan of Action,

Reiterating the firm conviction that peace, development, democracy and respect for fundamental human rights are essential in order to resolve the problems of uprooted populations in the region,

(a) Takes note of the report on the conclusion of the CIREFCA process, entitled Consolidating Peace in Central America Through an Inter-Agency Approach to Longer-term Needs of the Uprooted, 18/ submitted by the High Commissioner to the Executive Committee at its forty-fifth session;

(b) Fully endorses the Framework for Action in Favour of Populations and Areas Most Affected by Extreme Poverty, Conflict and Displacement and the Declaration of Commitments adopted at the third and final Meeting of the CIREFCA Follow-up Committee, as an appropriate strategy for the post-CIREFCA period which fully reflects the concerns expressed by the Executive Committee, at its forty-fourth session, in relation to uprooted populations in Central America;

(c) Reaffirms its strong support to the efforts being undertaken by the five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua), Belize and Mexico, with the aim of consolidating peace in Central America, to ensure full implementation of the commitments made at Mexico City on 29 June 1994, including, in particular, initiation of sustainable human development programmes in the identified priority areas where human displacement, extreme poverty, conflict and environmental degradation coincide;

(d) Calls upon the international community as a whole to continue providing needed support to ensure completion of the pending humanitarian agenda of CIREFCA, including in particular the need to secure durable solutions, especially through voluntary repatriation and reintegration, for Guatemalan refugees;

(e) Welcomes the constructive cooperation established between the countries of the region, the multilateral agencies, in particular UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations to achieve greater complementarity in their respective policies and programmes and encourages them to expand and develop cooperation, within their mandates, at the country level, in the post-CIREFCA period;

(f) Expresses its strong support for the regional colloquium on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Cartagena Declaration, to be hosted by the Government of Costa Rica, in December 1994, as a valuable opportunity for the relevant States to reaffirm the protection principles and humanitarian practices espoused by Cartagena and implemented within CIREFCA and to seek modalities to respond to new humanitarian challenges in the region;

(g) Urges UNHCR to continue the broad dissemination, in Latin America and elsewhere, where appropriate, of the norms and principles of international protection implemented within the framework of CIREFCA, as well as the humanitarian practices deriving from the implementation of the CIREFCA Plan of Action in the field of international protection;

(h) Conveys its appreciation for the active participation and contribution made by the United Nations system, through the Office of the Secretary-General, UNDP and UNHCR, throughout the five-year CIREFCA process.

3. Conclusion on the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees

31. The Executive Committee,

Reaffirming its support for the fundamental principles underlying the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees,

Further reaffirming the results of the Fifth Steering Committee of the International Conference on Indo-Chinese refugees and its Statement adopted on 14 February 1994, which stated, inter alia, that it would ensure the successful completion of the programmes by the target date of end 1995, and that recognizing the achievements of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Steering Committee nevertheless concluded that new initiatives were needed particularly to increase the rate of repatriation and bring the Comprehensive Plan of Action to an early and successful conclusion,

Recognizing with satisfaction the progress made in 1994 in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action, the near cessation of clandestine departures attributed to expanded mass information campaign, the regular departure programmes, the continued resettlement of Vietnamese refugees, and the completion of refugee status determination in countries of first asylum in 1994,

Noting with appreciation that, with international assistance and cooperation, continued voluntary repatriation in 1993 resulted in the return of 19,231 persons in conditions of safety and dignity,

Also noting with appreciation the work of all concerned Governments, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations over the past year,

Taking note of the results of the seventh tripartite meeting among the Government of Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and UNHCR from 26 to 28 July 1994 in Thailand, during which a time frame was agreed upon for the return of all Lao expected to repatriate voluntarily by the end of 1995,

Taking into account the memorandum of understanding of the Government of Indonesia, the Government of Viet Nam and UNHCR on principles and arrangements relating to returning Vietnamese non-refugees from Indonesia,

(a) Supports the continued voluntary repatriation programme to Viet Nam and the ongoing UNHCR monitoring and reintegration assistance programme in Viet Nam, reiterates the importance attached to the responsibility of States towards their own citizens and the return of persons determined not to be refugees to their country of origin in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan of Action, and draws attention to the screened-out Vietnamese in countries of first asylum and urges their early repatriation to Viet Nam;

(b) Urges all parties concerned to continue to reinforce efforts for the return and reintegration of Lao refugees and asylum-seekers from Thailand and neighbouring countries as well as international development agencies and non-governmental organizations to increase the capacity of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to absorb a higher number of returnees;

(c) Notes with appreciation the contribution to date of all countries of resettlement in finalizing the Comprehensive Plan of Action and calls for continuing efforts towards the fulfilment of their commitments by the end of 1995;

(d) Calls for the convening of a formal meeting of the Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Plan of Action in early 1995, preceded by a preparatory meeting, to complement the progress made so far by ensuring that remaining issues should be addressed, and to examine other modalities acceptable under international practices, for the return of screened-out Vietnamese from camps in the region as may be needed and as foreseen under the Comprehensive Plan of Action;

(e) Urges all Governments concerned, in particular countries of origin, to fully support the required action for the timely and successful conclusion of this major humanitarian programme by the target date of the end of 1995;

(f) Strongly appeals to the international community to provide the necessary financial support for all the activities in the countries of first asylum in 1995 for the safe and dignified return of screened-out Indo-Chinese asylum-seekers to their countries of origin, and in the countries of origin for the reintegration programmes, which will go beyond 1995.

4. Conclusion on repatriation to Afghanistan

32. The Executive Committee,

Reaffirming the importance and significance of voluntary repatriation as the most preferred durable solution to the refugee problem,

Noting Executive Committee conclusions Nos. 18 (XXI) and 40 (XXXVI), which underline the importance of promoting and facilitating voluntary repatriation,

Emphasizing that voluntary repatriation is a long-term, multidimensional and complex process, especially when it has been delayed for a long time,

Expressing concern over the continuing suffering of the Afghan people and the magnitude of the social and economic problems posed to Pakistan and the

Islamic Republic of Iran by the presence on their soil of millions of Afghan refugees,

Noting the slow pace of voluntary repatriation in 1994 owing to continued intense fighting at Kabul and other areas,

Fully aware that voluntary repatriation is most successful as a lasting solution when the necessary integration facilities for the returnees are provided in the country of origin, especially in the case of Afghanistan where the long-lasting war has led to the total destruction of infrastructures,

(a) Urges the international community and particularly States members of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme to step up their support of the efforts made by the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Governments in the region aimed at creating the political, economic and social framework conducive to a peace settlement in Afghanistan, thus allowing the return of Afghan refugees and displaced persons to their homes in safety and dignity;

(b) Calls upon the international community to continue to contribute generously to humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan and ongoing voluntary repatriation and reintegration activities;

(c) Requests the High Commissioner to review the general programme for the care and maintenance of the Afghan refugees, taking into account the increasing requirements of the world's largest caseload of refugees;

(d) Invites the High Commissioner, in support of the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan and other humanitarian and development agencies, to intensify the activities of her Office in the safe areas of Afghanistan so as to create conditions conducive for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin.

5. Conclusion on the former Yugoslavia

33. The Executive Committee,

Condemning the continuing flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and fundamental human rights and acts of aggression in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and recognizing the ongoing need for humanitarian assistance,

Underlining the lead-agency role within the United Nations assigned to UNHCR, and its joint efforts with the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organizations in mobilizing and distributing life-saving emergency supplies,

Reiterating the eminently humanitarian nature of the assistance programme,

(a) Urges all Governments and parties concerned to ensure that the Comprehensive Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in the former Yugoslavia continues to be fully implemented;

(b) Calls upon Governments and the international donor community to continue contributing generously to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Programme of Action;

(c) Calls upon Governments to continue to extend protection to those fleeing from the conflict.

6. Conclusion on the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

34. The Executive Committee,

Expressing concern over the magnitude of existing and potential refugee and related migratory movements on the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States,

(a) Encourages the efforts undertaken by the High Commissioner in approaching those problems with a regional perspective;

(b) Welcomes in this regard the initiative launched by the High Commissioner to engage in a process with Governments and all relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and bilateral agencies to promote and develop a concerted and comprehensive strategy to address problems of refugees, returnees, displaced persons and forced migrants in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States;

(c) Supports the High Commissioner's consultations in that process, which could lead to a regional conference under UNHCR auspices that would bring together all countries of the region, other countries with an interest in the matter, as well as bilateral agencies and international organizations, in particular, the International Organization for Migration.

7. Conclusion on the Partnership in Action Process

35. The Executive Committee,

Recalling the conclusion on the Partnership in Action (PARINAC) Process adopted by the Executive Committee at its forty-fourth session, 19/

Recognizing the importance of the contributions to the PARINAC Process made by the regional preparatory meetings held at Caracas, Kathmandu, Tunis, Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Budapest, whose recommendations were endorsed by the Global Conference held at Oslo in June 1994,

Noting with appreciation the report on PARINAC 20/ presented to the Executive Committee at its forty-fifth session,

Acknowledging that the joint agenda for humanitarian action, as set out in the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action, provides a useful basis for enhanced UNHCR/non-governmental organization collaboration based on principles of improved cooperation and coordination,

(a) Welcomes the PARINAC initiative and, in particular, the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Global Conference in June 1994;

(b) Commends recent UNHCR/non-governmental organization initiatives to implement recommendations in the Plan of Action adopted at the Global Conference in June 1994;

(c) Invites Governments to participate in the follow-up and in the broadening of the dialogue with UNHCR and non-governmental organizations;

(d) Encourages non-governmental organizations, Governments and UNHCR to identify areas of the Plan of Action where they can cooperate to implement particular recommendations;

(e) Requests the High Commissioner to report to the Executive Committee at its forty-sixth session on the follow-up to the PARINAC process and to keep the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection and the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters, as appropriate, informed about progress made.

IV. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

36. The Committee adopted by consensus the following provisional agenda of the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. General debate.
5. Programme, administrative and financial matters.
6. Participation of government observer delegations.
7. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the forty-seventh session of the Executive Committee.
8. Any other business.
9. Adoption of the draft report of the forty-sixth session.
10. Closing of the session.

V. GOVERNMENT OBSERVER PARTICIPATION IN 1994-1995

37. The following observer Governments have applied to participate in the work of the subcommittees and in informal meetings of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme from October 1994 to October 1995:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, India, Iraq, Ireland, Kenya, Kuwait, Malawi, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Notes

1/ A/AC.96/823.

2/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

3/ Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

4/ A/AC.96/821.

5/ EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.23/Rev.1.

6/ A/AC.98/404.

7/ A/AC.96/825, parts I-VI.

8/ A/AC.96/824.

9/ EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.25.

10/ A/AC.96/827.

11/ A/AC.96/829.

12/ A/AC.96/833.

13/ A/AC.96/834.

14/ EC/1994/SC.2/69.

15/ EC/1994/SC.2/70.

16/ A/AC.96/838.

17/ EC/1994/SC.2/CRP.20.

18/ A/AC.96/831.

19/ A/AC.96/821, para. 27.

20/ A/AC.96/832.

ANNEX

Opening statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme at its forty-fifth session

(Monday, 3 October 1994)

I am pleased to welcome you to the forty-fifth session of the Executive Committee. I am delighted to see the delegation of Spain seated for the first time as a full member at a plenary session of the Executive Committee.

Let me extend a special word of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Mr. J. F. Boddens-Hosang of the Netherlands, for his strong commitment, unstinting support and valuable advice during the past year. May I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election and that of the new Bureau. It is befitting that this Committee should be chaired by the Representative of a country which has generously provided asylum to millions of refugees. Your wisdom and guidance will be of tremendous value to my Office.

I would like to welcome Ms. Catherine Bertini, the Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP), as our guest speaker. Her presence here is testimony of WFP's indispensable contribution to refugee assistance, and our commitment to further strengthen that partnership.

The need for such partnership has rarely been greater. The progress towards peace in the Middle East and the birth of a democratic South Africa have been among rare signs of hope in a year too often marked by genocide, ethnic conflict and resurgent violence. As more and more people continue to be uprooted in almost every region of the world, their protection and assistance grow more problematic and solutions to their plight become ever more elusive. Whether stranded in countries of asylum or displaced inside their own countries, the fate of the uprooted has become tangled with geopolitical realities.

Not surprisingly, a symbiotic relationship is developing between the political initiatives and development activities of the United Nations, and its humanitarian action. The success of one is linked to the performance of the other.

Lying at a critical juncture between peace and conflict, relief and development, humanitarian action must retain its integrity, neutrality and impartiality. Its quest must remain the protection and well-being of the victims of war, violence and persecution. By protecting the individuals, we reduce the tensions in society and enhance global human security. It was this realization that gave birth to the unique mandate of UNHCR.

Amidst political instability and economic uncertainty, protection remains the essence of our humanitarian challenge. I should like to discuss with you today the contours and constraints of that challenge: the quality of protection abroad and on return; the links between protection and solutions; the prevention of refugee flows; and the need for greater commitment, cooperation and capacity to meet these challenges.

Protection abroad: the quality of asylum

The crisis in Rwanda has highlighted the very serious protection problems inherent in large-scale emergencies. Ravaged by war and still reverberating with tensions, Rwanda, together with Burundi, has produced some 2 million refugees. Unfortunately, the human toll has been too high. But had it not been for the generosity of the people of Zaire and the United Republic of Tanzania, and the remarkable efforts of non-governmental organizations, donor government service personnel and United Nations humanitarian agencies, I fear the casualties would have been much higher. We have deployed over 220 international staff for the operation. The assistance situation has stabilized in the United Republic of Tanzania and the worst of the emergency has been overcome in Goma, though not yet in Uvira and Bukavu.

The volatile security situation in a region vexed by ethnic complexities has seriously threatened the capacity of the countries of asylum to protect refugees. In Burundi, political and ethnic tensions have endangered refugees and returnees alike. In August 1994, a UNHCR field officer was killed in northern Burundi. I hope that the Convention of Government signed by the Burundi political parties on 10 September 1994 will lead soon to the formation of a new Government that can reduce tensions.

The violence which gripped Rwanda has been transported by the human tide to the refugee camps in eastern Zaire, and also the United Republic of Tanzania. The lives of refugees and humanitarian staff have been endangered and the delivery of relief and essential services disrupted by armed elements from the former Rwandese army and militia. The aim appears to be to control the refugee population, block their voluntary return to Rwanda and build resistance against the Government in Kigali.

I have conveyed my very serious concerns on the security situation of the refugees to the Zairian authorities and to the United Nations Secretary-General, and strongly urged the immediate removal of all armed elements from the camps. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General met with the Zairian authorities and discussions are now under way on how to achieve this objective.

The problem of insecurity in refugee camps is not unique to the Rwanda crisis, but is a deeply disturbing feature in many other countries too. As refugees flee the breakdown of political and social order in their country, they often find themselves in exile across the border in an environment not dissimilar to the one they fled, in remote areas outside the effective control of any Government. Overcrowded camps and the free flow of arms compound the situation. Refugee women and children are most seriously at risk, and open to abuse in the midst of violence.

UNHCR has tried to make a difference by establishing early presence in the field, decongesting camps and locating them in safer areas, paying greater attention to the needs of refugee women and providing training and support to government officials. But when refugees are threatened by armed gangs, former soldiers and militia, then, it becomes a matter of law enforcement. As this Committee has reiterated in the past, it is the primary responsibility of the country of asylum to ensure the personal security of refugees and maintain the exclusively civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements. While the principles are generally accepted, the political will, and more importantly, the capacity to implement them are often lacking. The international community must urgently examine how it can assist countries of

asylum to take the concrete action necessary to improve security in refugee camps.

If the quality of asylum has suffered in some countries, its availability has been restricted in others. I am very grateful to countries which, despite political and economic constraints, have continued to receive refugees generously. Keenly aware of the burden of host communities, we have pressed for greater assistance to them. But I am also disturbed at the growing reluctance of many States to keep their borders open.

Except in Western Europe, where asylum applications have steadily declined from 700,000 in 1992 to about 550,000 in 1993, the numbers of those seeking asylum are on the rise. In the face of persecution, war and violence, we must continue to uphold the institution of asylum. Indeed, I have sought to stress its temporary nature in an effort to broaden its availability. Asylum is not necessarily synonymous with an enduring solution. More often than not, it is a measure of interim protection, which buys time for solutions.

This was the reasoning behind the safe-haven concept that UNHCR urged for Haitian asylum-seekers. My Office has closely collaborated with the Government of the United States of America and other Governments in the region to ensure temporary refuge for Haitians until they can return home. Recent developments may be leading to that stage.

In somewhat different circumstances, the concept of temporary protection has been applied to refugees from former Yugoslavia. By providing immediate safety to victims of war and emphasizing eventual return, it addresses the needs of individuals as well as the concerns of States. With ever-growing numbers in need of international protection, I believe we must debate the wider and more consistent application of temporary protection. As we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the tenth anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, it is opportune to examine the lessons of the broader protection offered by these regional instruments.

In this changing context, resettlement remains an important tool of protection. I am very grateful to countries that continue to provide resettlement places.

Protection at home: the sustainability of solutions

There is an inherent link between protection and solutions. Frequently, the availability of protection abroad is affected by the possibility of solutions back home. Solutions cannot be sustained if the conflict and violence that provoked the exodus continue, and the security of the returnees is not assured.

This is why the search for solutions to refugee problems is not simply humanitarian but deeply dependent on political initiatives. Thus, the peace process in Mozambique has encouraged over a million refugees to return home. Positive developments in the Middle East may bring forth humanitarian solutions, in which my Office stands ready to play a role, if called upon, in line with our competence and our expertise, and in cooperation with other organizations.

I am very pleased that over 100,000 Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh have registered for repatriation, and that the pace of returns has significantly

accelerated. I welcome the continued bilateral dialogue between the Governments of Bhutan and Nepal and would like to initiate separate discussions with them on modalities for implementing solutions for the 80,000 persons in the camps in Nepal.

I am disappointed, however, that prospects for solutions have been foiled by renewed violence in Liberia, Mali and Somalia. Also, the situation of over 2.5 million refugees who returned to Afghanistan remains extremely precarious, with intensified fighting at Kabul and elsewhere in the country. Sadly, the number of returnees in 1994 has been the lowest since the operation began in 1990. There are still some 3.3 million refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

In former Yugoslavia, too, the future remains highly unpredictable. We are watching developments closely, as they will determine the course of our own operation, as will donor support. Unless we receive the funds we need, we will have to cut down our activities.

In every repatriation operation, basic issues of security and the political commitment and capacity of the country of origin to provide it, are critical factors. If those who return do not feel that their lives and liberties are safe then, far from bringing about a solution, repatriation may actually precipitate another outflow.

This is why UNHCR is emphasizing the need to create an environment of confidence and security in Rwanda, and has taken a cautious policy on repatriation. As Cambodia and El Salvador have shown, a greater operational human rights role of the United Nations can be a valuable confidence-building measure in such situations. Urgent financial and personnel support should be given to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in his efforts to deploy human rights monitors in Rwanda. Furthermore, my Office stands ready to support any initiatives for the reconciliation and rehabilitation of a society traumatized by ethnic killings on a genocidal scale.

I welcome the establishment by the United Nations General Assembly of the Human Rights Verification Mission to Guatemala. The Secretary-General has appointed Mr. L. Franco, currently my Director of International Protection, to lead the mission, and I know you join me in wishing him success in his new assignment.

If yesterday's repatriation is not to become tomorrow's emergency, then the international community must show greater commitment to post-conflict rehabilitation. I am disturbed by the fragility of Cambodia. I am disappointed at the lack of interest among the international community to consolidate our efforts in Tajikistan. The sustainability of solutions is one of my major concerns.

In an effort to assist communities that receive returnees, we have both widened the application of our community-based micro-projects, or quick impact projects, geographically from Mozambique to Myanmar, as well as deepened our understanding of them conceptually as a rapid, visible and viable contribution to reintegration. But our efforts can only be meaningful if they are placed in a larger framework of national rehabilitation, economic and social development and democratization of war-torn societies such as Mozambique.

To that end, as I indicated last year, we have sought to forge new alliances with development and financial institutions. Our efforts have begun

to pay some dividends already with grants from the World Bank and the African Development Bank. We have also received a grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for rehabilitation of environmental damage by refugees which will enable us to assist countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania.

A comprehensive approach: linking protection, solutions and prevention

As refugees become part of larger, more complex movements of people, neither the solution nor the prevention of refugee problems can be effectively promoted without addressing the plight of internally displaced persons. Thus, within the limits of its capacity and resources, my Office remains willing to assume responsibility for the internally displaced where there is a close link to an existing or potential refugee problem, as in Georgia, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka. This is in line with the Executive Committee conclusion of 1993, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.

In Rwanda, we are assisting internally displaced persons, within the framework of the United Nations Emergency Relief Operation. Concentrating in the south-west, in the so-called former French zone, I believe our activities, together with those of others, have contributed towards preventing a further outflow.

Recognizing the enormous scale of the humanitarian problem in countries of origin, we support a division of labour within a clear structure. However, in carving out responsibilities, the United Nations must remain sensitive to the fundamental protection needs of the victims and to the protection mandate of my Office, if the goal is viable solutions.

Just as protection is linked to solutions, so too solutions and prevention are two sides of the same coin. They demand a more comprehensive and substantive effort to address the causes which force people to flee, as was done in the process of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) in Central America, which was successfully completed in June 1994. The Comprehensive Plan of Action in South-East Asia has also contributed in stemming the flow from Viet Nam. I call upon the countries in the region to make all efforts to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan of Action will be completed by the end of 1995.

I have frequently advocated a regional and comprehensive approach for Europe. Particularly in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, seething ethnic tensions, aggravated by political and economic restructuring, have created a hotbed for coerced movements. The range and scope of our involvement have grown from traditional protection activities to emergency management training and capacity building in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union, assisting refugees and displaced persons in the Caucasus, organizing the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons in Georgia and monitoring returnees in Tajikistan.

Piecemeal approaches are not the answer to the diversity and complexity of the challenges in that part of the world. Therefore, I have been encouraged by the request of the Government of the Russian Federation, asking me to initiate a comprehensive strategy for the region. My Office is consulting with the relevant Governments and organizations on preparations for an international meeting next year. Let me caution, though, that a regional strategy, whether in

this part of the world or elsewhere, can only succeed if there is unequivocal and sustained commitment of the Governments of the region, based on which the international community can make its contribution.

Looking ahead: safeguarding the mandate

I have briefly outlined the challenges confronting my Office today in protecting refugees and resolving their plight. We cannot play our role in isolation. Our action must be part of a global strategy for international peace and security, human rights and economic and social development. But that brings new pressures and constraints on my Office, reducing our humanitarian space. In such situations, how do we defend the rights of the victims? Not only are human lives at stake. In the end, peace and progress are also the victims of humanitarian disasters.

I believe our humanitarian mandate can be safeguarded only through greater commitment, cooperation, clarity and capacity.

Commitment of Governments

The commitment of Governments to the basic humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality is essential to the credibility of humanitarian action and hence to our ability to protect human beings and find solutions to their plight. By building trust and confidence among the victims, we can go where peace-keeping forces cannot, we can buy time and space for political action, we can contribute to reconciliation. We need the political and moral support of Governments to maintain our distinct humanitarian mandate.

We also need the sustained financial support of Governments. Funding has been more regular in 1994 than in the past, and I am grateful to the donors for this. I am particularly pleased to note the growing and significant support from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). But we are still short of at least US$ 325 million in net contributions in order to reach our budgetary target of $1.3 billion in 1994. I hope the commendable donor attention to the Rwanda/Burundi crisis will be sustained because our requirements there are likely to continue for some time. Meanwhile, I must urge Governments not to overlook the needs elsewhere. Mozambique has been a bright spot in a gloomy year - please give us the support we need to complete that operation. For Guatemala, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, we have received only half the funds we need. To make solutions a reality, we need support.

Cooperation with international and non-governmental organizations

Ms. Bertini's presence here is indicative of our deepening collaboration with WFP as we jointly work to meet the basic food needs of refugees, returnees and internally displaced. Our cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is expanding in conflict situations. We are also working closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to concretize our partnership in the field. With UNICEF we share a common concern for refugee children. As a former professor, I have been particularly pleased by the initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to provide emergency education kits to refugee children in the United Republic of Tanzania so that their schooling could resume at an early stage of the emergency.

Cooperation is not a luxury but a necessity. Indeed, it is in this spirit that we launched Partnership in Action (PARINAC) with non-governmental organizations in 1993. Now we must all work to implement the recommendations adopted at the Global Conference held at Oslo in June 1994 particularly in the area of capacity-building and training of local non-governmental organizations. I hope that your meeting with our non-governmental organization partners for the first time on 30 September 1994 has helped to consolidate your support for PARINAC. Without your support, the full potential of our partnership cannot be realized.

Partnerships are most successful when they are built on complementarity of mandates and expertise.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities

We need clarity of roles and responsibilities. As the political, military and humanitarian mandates interact in multifaceted United Nations operations, it is essential that all actors understand and respect each other's mandate, roles and responsibilities. Structures must be clear and established early. Relief needs to be coordinated but our protection mandate is clear and should be respected. I support the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to allocate responsibilities in complex emergencies, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Needless to say, field level coordination should be kept lean to avoid bureaucratic layers.

Innovative approaches to capacity-building and management

We need innovative approaches to capacity-building and management. While the emergency response of UNHCR stood us well in the United Republic of Tanzania, the scale and speed of the influx to Goma was overwhelming, compelling us to search for more innovative means of building capacity. Thus was born the idea of "service packages", under which donor Governments provided funds, facilities and services in sectors where our capacity and that of our partners were totally overwhelmed. We hope soon to invite the participants to review together the lessons learned with service packages. Having seen the way military expertise can turn the tide of human suffering, we are actively examining the varying use of military support in a civilian-controlled multilateral humanitarian operation. Military assets could be a "force multiplier", to use a military term, in other words, not a long-term involvement but a critical input to fill gaps in our response capacity. I am following with interest the current debate in the General Assembly on similar issues.

At the end of the day, capacity often translates into quality of staff. The commitment, competence and courage of UNHCR staff are truly impressive. As promised in 1993, we are investing in a career management system, which, together with other reforms, should give UNHCR a human resources management system that the organization needs and the staff deserves. I would like to pay a special tribute to UNHCR staff and those of our partners who risked or lost their lives in situations of peril and conflict in the past year. In this connection, let me express the hope that the draft convention on the safety and security of United Nations staff and related personnel, currently being discussed in New York, would be extended to United Nations humanitarian staff and to our non-governmental organization partners. Our people are in no less danger than the peace-keepers, our tasks no less meritorious.

Management is not just about staff and money. It is about thinking and planning. As traditional responses prove inadequate, we must search for new ideas and approaches. We must assess the lessons of history so that we can better predict the trends of the future. As the Chairman pointed out in 1993, we must access the wide range of thinking in academic, policy research and other circles. We have actively contributed to the debate on population and development at the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo in September 1994. We have much to say on the issues of social integration and role of women on which the Social Summit in Copenhagen and the World Conference in Beijing will focus. These are all issues which deeply affect and are affected by the dynamics of displacement. We must play a leading role in the international discourse on humanitarian issues.

I believe the capacity of UNHCR for strategic thinking and planning needs to be enhanced. Planning should be linked to operations, so that our programmes can reflect our strategies. Thus, I intend to create a policy planning function in UNHCR at a senior management level and link it with the operational sectors of the house. I am considering the various administrative options of how to do so.

Simultaneously, we need to strengthen our ability to monitor the quality of our management. I have proposed the creation of an inspection and evaluation service, reporting directly to me, "feeling the pulse" of our major operations and field offices from time to time. Policy planning on the one hand and management oversight and evaluation on the other should give us a good balance.

As we enhance our thinking capacity internally, we must broaden our perspectives externally. With this objective in mind, I have extended a personal invitation to a small group of eminent, non-government personalities, representing a broad spectrum of today's society. We would meet informally about twice a year during the course of my mandate. The purpose would be to share insights and ideas so as to gain a better understanding of the global context in which humanitarian crises emerge and must be resolved.

To conclude, today's humanitarian challenges are manifold and expanding. Emergencies that we once described as unprecedented are becoming the norm. Protection principles that were once clearly recognized are now being questioned. We are moving into situations from which we would have once evacuated. Our budget and our staff have doubled in four years. Our offices are spread over 250 locations. As our world and our work change, we must re-examine our premises and policies, we must review our management functions and structures. We must ask: "Where are we going?" and "How do we get there?"

The cataclysmic change in the role of the United Nations has given our own work a new dimension. When peace breaks down and development fails, humanitarian action is moving in to stem the human suffering. But as ethnic conflicts spread and political solutions become more elusive, there is a risk that humanitarian operations could become prolonged, draining limited resources and causing untold suffering. To avoid that, we must develop a strategy of vision and a plan of action. Complementing an Agenda for Peace and an agenda for development, the time may be ripe to launch an agenda for humanitarian action.

As we move forward, I know I can count on you to support our challenging but satisfying mission.